When do elite cyclists go the extra mile? Team identification mediates the relationship between perceived leadership qualities of the captain and social laboring.

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Abstract

In order for a sports team to function optimally, it is essential to avoid motivational losses due to working in a group, also known as social loafing. Ideally, team members can even show an increase in individual effort because of working in a group, which is labeled social laboring. The present study investigated the impact of the leadership qualities of the team captain on social laboring in an elite cycling context. In addition, we examined the underlying process of this effect by focusing on team identification as mediator of the relationship between transformational leadership and social laboring. Participants were 55 male cyclists at the highest competitive level of professional cycling. Structural Equation Modeling demonstrated that the more the captain was perceived as leading by example, the more teammates reported social laboring. This positive relationship was fully mediated by team identification. This finding supports the Social Identity Approach of Leadership, which proposes that social identification is the explanatory process through which contemporary leaders deliver their outcomes.

Keywords: athlete leadership, social laboring, team identification

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It has been disputed for several decades whether working in groups might have a positive or negative effect on productivity. The main tenet in this discussion is that groups often perform worse than one might expect based upon the skills and qualities of the individual group members. This effect is known as social loafing and has been defined as "the reduction in motivation when individuals work collectively, compared with when they work individually" (Hardy & Latané, 1986). This motivational loss causes a reduction in effort and reduced team performance. Social loafing is a pervasive and robust phenomenon (Hogg & Vaughan, 2005), which has been found in both male and female teams (Karau & Williams, 1993), with participants from different cultures, and in various tasks, ranging from brainstorming activities (Harkins & Petty, 1982) to physical tasks as rope pulling (Ingham, Levinger, Graves, & Peckham, 1974), swimming (Latane, Harkins, & Williams, 1980), and rowing (Anshel, 1995).

However, it also has been stated that "one of the truly remarkable things about work groups is that they can not only make 2 + 2 = 3 but that they also have the capacity of making 2 + 2 = 5" (Vermeulen & Bender, 1998, p. 29). This latter effect has been termed social laboring, and refers to the tendency for individuals to increase their performance when working in group (Haslam, 2004; Karau & Williams, 1993). Based on the testimonials of high performing athletes in team sports, one of the important factors underlying their desire to give it all or to deliver maximal effort are not only the leadership qualities of their coach, but also the leadership qualities of the athlete leaders of the team (for a review, see Cotterill & Fransen, 2016). The impact of athlete leaders is fully recognized by top coaches, as illustrated in the quote of Mike Krzyzewski, head coach of the men's basketball team at Duke University: "Talent is important. But the single most important ingredient after you get the

talent is internal leadership. It's not the coaches as much as one single person or people on the team who set higher standards than that team would normally set for itself" (Janssen, 2003, p. xxxi). Research confirmed the impact of high quality athlete leadership for athlete satisfaction, team confidence, team cohesion and team performance (Fransen, Coffee, et al., 2014; Fransen, Haslam, et al., 2015; Fransen, Steffens, et al., 2016).

Athlete Transformational Leadership and Team Members' Effort

Burns (1978) stated that true leadership arises from working with followers: effective leaders have the ability to inspire the people to do things because they want to do them rather than because they feel obliged to do them. This notion is at the heart of the transformational approach to leadership. Since Bass' work on transformational leadership (Bass,1985; Bass & Avolio, 2005), much research has been conducted to assess the relationship between transformational leadership and the performance of followers. As a result, accumulating evidence supports the positive impact of transformational leaders on work attitudes and performance both at the individual and organizational level (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990; Lowe et al., 1996; Liao & Chuang, 2007; MacKenzie, Podsakoff, & Rich, 2001; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). In this regard, several authors stated that the essence of transformational leadership lies in the possibility of enabling followers to demonstrate quantitative performance beyond formal job roles, also known as extra-role behavior (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 1990; Pillai, Schriesheim, & Williams, 1999).

Horn (2008) stated that the framework offered by transformational leadership could be viable for investigating the impact of leadership in a sport context. Following Hoption, Phelan, and Barling (2007) there is every reason to believe that the effects of transformational leadership in organizations also occur in sport teams. For example, German student athletes were observed to deliver more effort when their karate coaches showed transformational leadership qualities (Rowold, 2006). Furthermore, Charbonneau, Barling, and Kelloway

(2001) demonstrated that transformational coaches positively influenced team members' intrinsic motivation by raising athletes' love of sport and their feeling of appreciation by their coaches. As such, research offers clear arguments to assume the relevance of transformational coach leadership in sport domains as well (Murray & Mann, 1998). It should be noted though that the coach is not the only source of leadership in a team. Also athletes within the team can fulfill important leadership functions (Fransen, Vanbeselaere, et al., 2014). However, the research examining the impact of transformational behavior of the athlete leaders is sparse. Therefore, in the current study we will investigate in professional cycling teams whether the transformational leadership qualities of the team captain are positively linked with the willingness of team members to go the extra mile (i.e., making more effort than is expected).

Team Identification Underpinning the Effectiveness of Transformational Leadership

Although the literature on transformational leadership behaviors and social laboring clearly suggests a relationship between both concepts, the underlying mechanism through which transformational team leaders foster team-oriented effort in followers is left largely uninvestigated. Bass (1985) already suggested that transformational leadership would motivate followers to work for the good of the group by increasing their social identification. By identifying with their team, team members would internalize the collective goals and perceive team-oriented efforts to be personally meaningful. Haslam et al. (2011) further pointed at the relevance of the Social Identity Approach to explain social laboring by proposing that social identification is the explanatory process through which contemporary leaders deliver their outcomes. As such, Kark, Shamir, and Chen (2003), using a sample of 888 bank employees working under 76 branch managers, found that followers' social identification mediated the effects of transformational leadership behaviors on important psychological outcomes, such as organization-based self-esteem and collective efficacy in followers. Recent findings in sport settings also found that athlete leaders strengthen

teammates' identification with the team (Steffens et al., 2014). Furthermore, team identification was shown to mediate the effects of athlete leadership on collective efficacy and performance (Fransen, Coffee et al., 2014; Fransen, Haslam, et al., 2015; Fransen, Steffens, et al., 2016). Moreover, Hoigaard et al. (2013) demonstrated that higher levels of team identification significantly enhanced the team performance in a cycling time-trial. Although research on the consequences of team identification in sport settings has been limited, these studies support the idea that team identification mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and its effects on team members' performance.

The Present Study

First, the present study focuses on the leadership impact of the team captain, as formal athlete leader of the team. Sport psychological research on leadership has focused almost exclusively on the leadership position of the coach (see Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998 for review) with athletes fulfilling the role of followers (Amorose, 2007; Horn, 2008). However, more recent research has pointed at the importance of athlete leadership to increase athletes' identification with the team (Fransen, Coffee, et al., 2014), to strengthen athletes' confidence in their team (Fransen et al., 2012; Fransen, Vanbeselaere, et al., 2014; Fransen, Vanbeselaere, et al., 2015), to improve the team's resilience (Morgan, Fletcher, & Sarkar, 2013), and to strengthen its task and social cohesion (Smith et al;, 2013; Loughead, Fransen, et al., 2016). The present study assesses the captain's transformational leadership qualities and proposes that higher transformational leader quality of the captain is associated with a higher willingness of the team members to go the extra mile (Hypothesis 1).

Furthermore, this study went beyond description and sought for the underlying mechanisms explaining this relationship. On the basis of the theorizing of the effect of transformational leadership in the classic texts of Bass (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio,2006), and the well documented impact of social identification on several outcome measures in sports

(Fransen, Coffee et al., 2014; Fransen, Haslam, et al., 2015; Fransen, Steffens, et al., 2016), we expect that the positive relationship between the captain's transformational leadership behaviors and social laboring amongst the teammates is mediated by the social identification of these riders with their professional cycling team (Hypothesis 2).

We chose to test these relationships in the specific population of world class cyclists. McNeillis (1993) argued that sport settings at the highest performance level share most of the core elements of business settings such as challenging goal setting and high time pressure. As such, an elite sport context offers a close analogue to the corporate world, where the critical role of identification has been highlighted (e.g., Ashfort & Mael, 1989). Despite this argument, research in applied sport psychology has predominantly been conducted among athletes at university or college level. The same holds for previous research on transformational leadership in sports (Zacharatos, Barley and Kelloway, 2000; Charbonneau, Barling and Kelloway, 2001; Rowold, 2006; Smith, Arthur, Hardy, Callow, and Williams, 2013).

Social laboring is not evident at all in road cycling at the highest level. Of course there is a strong competition between teams, favoring identification with the own team, but at the same time great individual interests are present. Since 1984 there is a ranking system for road bicycle riders based upon their personal results in all appointed races of the International Cyclist Union (UCI), over a twelve month period. This ranking is very important for the economical value of the rider, for his chances to get a better contract or a lucrative transfer to another team. In other words, there exists a conflict between self-sacrificing for the good of the team (social laboring) and riding for private interests. Another characteristic of top-ranked cycling teams is that all team members are very talented athletes with strong personal ambitions. Nevertheless, these cycling teams are organized to have a formal on-field leader for whom the other riders of the team have to work, in order to increase the chances of this

captain to win the race. To realize this team goal, at a level where the differences in athletic potential are minimal, the team members have to give the extra mile, thereby offering their own chances. In other words, social laboring is an important topic in the context of world class sports, with athletes of very similar athletic potential, where small differences in effort can make a different outcome. And social laboring certainly is an issue worthy of further exploration in the context of professional cycling.

Method

Procedure

During the initial recruitment phase, coaches, team managers, and team doctors were contacted by e-mail or telephone and informed about the purpose and content of the study. In total, seven teams, classified as Professional Continental teams by the ranking system of the International Cyclist Union (UCI), were contacted. Four teams collaborated in the experiment. The idea that this research could influence the team dynamics was the primary argument for the three other teams not to participate. The questionnaire was administered at the end of the cycling calendar, dependent on the team's availability during the winter training camps. An informed consent form was provided to all participants in order to guarantee the voluntary and confidential nature of the research. Moreover, they were ensured to have access to the general results upon the end of the study. No rewards were given and the APA ethical standards were followed in conducting the research in which riders were asked to complete a questionnaire that required approximately 15 minutes.

Participants

The participants were 55 professional elite cyclists of four UCI ranked cycling teams. The four participating teams are in possession of a UCI World Tour license for 2015, and are allowed to start in all races of the World Tour, the highest competition level in road cycling.

Out of these four teams, the overall response rate was 60 % of the number of cyclists that were expected to participate in the training camps. All participants were male.

Measures

All participants were provided with a paper and pencil questionnaire in English. Native speakers and team management secured the clarity and applicability of all questions. We chose to provide the items in a retrospective format, to assure that riders' perceptions of leadership qualities as well as their self-reported laboring were based on multiple experiences during the course of an entire competition season. Therefore, we asked to evaluate the leadership qualities of the team captain of last season, and to report their team-oriented effort during the past season.

Team identification. Based on previous research (Doosje et al., 1995) team identification was measured using three items ("I felt strongly connected to my team"; "I was very happy that I belonged to that team"; and "It was very important to me that I was a member of that team"). The validity of the present scale was confirmed in different research studies with sport teams (Fransen, Coffee, et al., 2014; Fransen, Haslam, et al., 2015; Fransen, Vanbeselaere, et al., 2014). The items were scored on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from -3 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*) and showed good internal consistency in this study (Cronbach's alpha = .82).

Transformational leadership. According to the classical texts of Bass (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006) the transformational leadership style is assumed to contain four dimensions. First, the dimension of *Inspirational Motivation* describes the tendency of leaders to motivate members towards achievement (e.g., "My leader displays enthusiasm about pursuing team goals"). Second, transformational leaders show strong commitment to goals and lead by example, as captured in the dimension of *Idealized Influence* (e.g., "My leader seeks team interests over personal interests". This second dimension thus describes the

tendency of leaders to walk the talk (i.e., leading by example). Third, by demonstrating *Intellectual Stimulation* the leader challenges followers in taking a different perspective on a given job (e.g., "My leader encourages ideas other than own"). Fourth, *Individualized Consideration* captures behaviors by leaders in treating individual team members with respect, to make them feel valued, and to show empathy (e.g., "My leader recognizes individual team members' needs and desires").

A transformational leadership scale selecting 24 items from Bass and Avolio's (2000) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5x Short (i.e., based on face validity for sports settings) was used to measure these four dimensions. All items were scored on a five-point Likert scale, indicating the frequency with which behaviors were demonstrated, ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*frequently if not always*).

Social laboring. Self-reported social laboring was measured using five items, scored on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from -3 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*). Example items are: "Last season, I was eager to go to the extreme for my team" or "Last season, I -sacrificed myself completely for my team". The items are based on the Self-Reported Social Loafing Questionnaire by Hoigaard et al. (2010). The scores on this scale proved to be reliable and valid within a sample of top-level Norwegian athletes (Hoigaard et al., 2010), and confirmed to be psychometrically sound in the research of De Backer et al. (2015) with elite female sport teams. Cronbach's α for the scale in this study was .78 indicating good internal consistency.

Data Analysis

After calculating the scale reliabilities and descriptive statistics, the hypothesized model was tested with Structural Equation Modeling (Kline, 2010) using STATA. To test the mediation effect in this model, we followed the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach as developed by Holmbeck (1997). Although causality cannot be inferred, the

proposed nature of the mediated relationship is such that the predictor variable would influence the mediator which, in turn, would influence the outcome (Holmbeck, 1997). Moreover, SEM provides information on the degree of fit for the entire model after controlling for measurement error, making it the preferred method to test the hypothesized mediation effect. A critical prerequisite in order to investigate mediation is the significance of the relationship between A (predictor variable) and B (mediator), but also A → C (outcome) and B → C. By comparing this model under a constrained and unconstrained condition, one can examine whether the unconstrained model offers a significant improvement of fit over the first model using a chi-square difference test. If the previously significant relationship between predictor and outcome is reduced to non-significance when taking the mediator into account, we can conclude that a mediation effect is present. Since the solitary use and interpretation of the Pearson Chi-square statistic is sensitive to sample size and is not interpretable due to absence of upper bound, this fit measure was complemented with additional indices evaluating the overall adequacy of the model. These are the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) index. A good fit is demonstrated when CFI and TLI are .90 or above and when SRMR is below .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and intercorrelations of the different variables are displayed in Table 1. Alpha coefficients for internal consistency can be found on the diagonal. The data show overall high scores on social laboring (M = 2.13; SD =.78) and on team identification (M = 2.36; SD =.79) on a scale from -3 to 3. The four subscales of transformational leadership all correlated highly, with correlations ranging from .52 to .76, consistent with earlier findings (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2003).

In testing the hypothesized meditation effect, we first investigated the direct paths between the variables that are central to the proposed model (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Our findings support a significant positive impact of transformational leadership on the outcome variable ($\beta = 0.35$; $p = .006$). The second meditational condition described by Holmbeck (1997) requires a significant relationship between identification and both the outcome and the predictor variable. Significant direct paths emerged between transformational leadership and identification ($\beta = .53$; $p < .001$) and between identification and social laboring ($\beta = .57$; $p < .001$). In other words, all prerequisite conditions in order to test mediation by Holmbeck (1997) were fulfilled.

The second step is to evaluate the unconstrained model allowing for a direct relationship between transformational leadership and social laboring ($\beta = .35$; $p = .006$). As mentioned above, the fit of this model proved to be satisfactory. Moreover the direct link was reduced to non-significance when the mediator was added to the model ($\beta = .073$; $p = .60$). As such, we can conclude that team identification fully mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and social laboring. This model provided excellent fit with the data. Furthermore, the results of a confirmatory factor analysis, performed by STATA, indicated also good fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.36$; CFI = .98; TLI = .96; SRMR = .05). Standardized regression path coefficients and proportions of explained variance can be found in Figure 1. To test our final model, the Chi-square difference test showed no significant difference in fit between the unconstrained and constrained model ($\Delta\chi^2(9) = 12.25$; $p = .20$), thus again supporting a fully mediated model.

To obtain more insight in the effect of the different dimensions of transformational leadership, we also tested the model in which the four subscales of transformational leadership were included as separate predictors. The confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated an excellent fit of the model to our data ($\chi^2/df = 0.14$; *CFI* = 1.00; *TLI* = 1.00;

SRMR = .02). Figure 2 displays the standardized regression path coefficients and proportions of explained variance. The results demonstrated that the idealized influence of the team captain was the main facet of transformational leadership that influenced teammates' identification with the team ($\beta = .42$; $p < .05$) and in turn also indirectly influenced social laboring ($\beta = .24$; $p < .05$).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the association between the team captain's leadership qualities and the social laboring by the team members in a professional cycling context. Individual effort in favor of the team is not evident in elite road cycling, because high individual interests are at stake since the new UCI points system has been introduced. Previously, domestiques (i.e., riders working for the benefit of their captain) were not concerned with their own finishing order. However, riders now get points for their finish position. This change in regulations presses domestiques to consider their own performance rather than only the performance of their leaders, which can hamper social laboring in professional road cyclists.

In line with Hypothesis 1, the study findings demonstrated that the leaders within the team are important to foster social laboring among the team members. More specifically, it was shown that when the team captain adopts a high-quality transformational leadership style, team members were more likely to go the extra mile for their team. The association between captain's perceived leadership qualities and social laboring by the team members supports the idea that "transformational leadership behaviors motivate teammates to perform above and beyond the call of duty" (Podsakoff et al., 1990, p. 137).

Furthermore, the study went beyond description and provided more insight in the mechanisms underpinning the relationship between the captain's transformational leadership behavior and the social laboring of the other team members. In line with Hypothesis 2, our

findings suggest that transformational leadership behaviors by the team captain impact the level of social laboring by teammates through the positive effects on identification of these athletes with their sports team. The study findings confirm previous studies, which demonstrated that athlete leaders can impact team members' team confidence and team performance through the extent in which they are able to foster team members' identification with their team (Fransen, Coffee, et al., 2014; Fransen, Haslam, et al., 2015; Fransen, Steffens, et al., 2016).

In the present study, this identification process seems to be facilitated by the leadership behaviors, captured under the dimension *Idealized influence*. A high score on this subscale means that a captain is perceived as "willing to sacrifice himself for the sake of the team" and as "seeking team interests over personal interests". Regarding this dimension of transformational leadership, Wang et al (2011) posit that transformational leaders influence their followers to engage in contextual performance by serving as role models who are willing to sacrifice their own interests. In team sports 'leading by example' and 'being a role model' are frequently mentioned as determining characteristics of coach or athlete leadership. This is illustrated by the following quote from Larry Bird, captain of the first US Dream Team, winning the basketball Olympic gold: "Leadership is getting players to believe in you. If you tell a teammate you're ready to play as tough as you're able to, you'd better go out there and do it. Players will see right through a phony. And they can tell when you're not giving it all you've got." (Bird & Ryan, 1995).

The fact that leaders are more effective if they are seen to be acting in ways that serve their in-group's interests rather than their personal interests is the core idea of the Social Identity Approach to Leadership (SIAL; Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011). More specifically, in order to mobilize followers' support and direct their energies, leaders need not only to "be one of us" (*identity prototypicality*), but also to "do it for us" (*identity*

advancement), to ”craft a sense of us” (*identity entrepreneurship*), and to ”embed a sense of us” (*identity impresarioship*) (Steffens et al., 2014). There is a strong resemblance between the dimension of identity advancement (i.e., doing it for us) of the SIAL and the idealized influence dimensions of the transformational leadership approach. In fact, both dimensions point at the fact that leaders are more effective to the extent that they are seen to be acting as in-group champions; that is, if they are seen to be acting in ways that serve their in-group’s interests, rather than their personal interests or those of other out-groups (Steffens et al., 2014). The present findings provide further support for the SIAL by showing that leaders, who are willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their team and who are seeking team interests over personal interests, are able to foster members’ identity with their team. This increased identification with their team in turn fosters optimal team functioning, in this study characterized by more social laboring.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

Several limitations of this study are apparent. First, the small number of participants has much to do with the selection of the target group. It should be noted however that world-class athletes constitute by definition a very small group and are far more difficult to engage for research goals compared with high school or collegiate athletes. The fact that the management of three of the seven teams that were contacted refused to collaborate is another proof of the strategy at the highest levels of competitive sport to carefully protect the athletes from outside influences.

Second, the cross-sectional design constrains us in making causal inferences. The use of a self-report questionnaire potentially limits the reliability of participants’ responses and increases the risk of social desirability. Although we tried to reduce socially desirable answers by assessing the key variables retrospectively, this remains an important concern. The current design was the only option due to limited time range provided by the management of the

teams. Future research could adopt a longitudinal research design, in order to further investigate how transformational leadership, team identification, and social laboring might influence each other reciprocally over time.

Third, the data of the present study were collected among world-class road cyclists, which is a very specific population. As a consequence, the study findings may be population-specific and it needs to be tested whether they also apply for other sports. For example, in elite cycling, the only relevant dimension of transformational leadership was the leader's idealized influence. Indeed, for example leaders' intellectual stimulation (i.e., challenging followers in taking a different perspective on a given job) seems to be a leadership dimension that has less relevance for road cycling, where the crucial decisions must be taken during the race and are exclusively taken by the captain or via earphones by the coach in the car in procession. However, in other sports, this dimension could be more predictive for optimal team functioning. Future research could shed more light on the relative importance of different dimensions of transformational leadership, according to the different challenges of different team sports. For example, one could test whether the leadership dimension *Individualized Consideration* has more impact in team sports with a more differentiated hierarchical structure. Treating each individual team member, bench players as well as the star players, with respect and empathy, and making them all feel valued, might have a strong impact in such a team context.

Finally, the present study demonstrated that team captains are able to foster team members' social laboring. Besides the impact of the leader, social laboring may also have been predicted by other factors, inherent to the specific environment of elite road cycling. For example, Hardy and Crace's (1991) suggested that the level of expertise people have in a certain field, might reduce social loafing tendencies. Given that the participants in the current study were all world-class elite cyclists, they can without any doubt be considered as experts

in their field. Furthermore, the live (internet) covering of most of the competitions where the participants of this study are involved is extensive, which heightens the identifiability of athletes' efforts during a race. It has been well documented that the visibility of individual effort is a moderator variable for the magnitude of social loafing (see Karau & Williams, 1993 for a review). More specifically, the more individual effort is visible, the less likely that social loafing will occur. As such, this broad media coverage might have stimulated an increase in social laboring. Future research could provide more insight in the relative impact of the leader and these environmental factors in explaining the social laboring expressed by the team members.

Practical Implications

We assume that most team coaches take it for granted that athlete leadership is important for team members' effort and performance. If they accept the scientific evidence that leaders are very much made and not born, coaches should spend more time developing leadership skills of their captain. The results of a study by Barling et al. (1996) on transformational leadership training offered substantial evidence for the trainability of the leadership style. As a consequence coaches cannot afford saying that they have to deal with a team without natural born leaders. They can benefit from an athlete leadership development program as described by Cotterill (2016). A part of this program focused on athletes who were identified as having captaincy potential. A study by Gould, Voelker, and Griffes (2013) offers several recommendations for coaches developing leadership skills in captains, based on interviews with coaches in youth sport. According to the authors, it is warranted to emphasize the importance of transformational leadership as it relates to both the development and effectiveness of high school sport captains.

The present study highlights the role of team identification as a mediator in the relationship between leadership quality of the captain and teammates' effort. In professional

cycling there seems to be a wide acceptance of the importance of developing a team identity, as can be derived from the traditional interventions such as wearing team clothes, also outside competition, and team branding. Moreover, team building activities are very common in professional cycling to strengthen team members' identification with their team, and consequently increase their motivation, effort, and resulting performance.

An example of how to foster members' identification with the team was demonstrated by John Degenkolb, the captain of the team Giant–Alpecin. After he won in 2015 not only the longest tour (i.e., Milan-San Remo), but also the toughest one day Grand Tour Stage (i.e., Paris-Roubaix), he invited the whole team to climb on the official winners' podium to celebrate together. Afterwards Degenkolb explained the success in terms of a fabulous teamwork: "We are prepared to go through the fire for each other" (Annema, 2015). The present study demonstrated that by being a role model for their followers, leaders are able to foster members' identification with the team. This common sense of 'us' will in turn inspire the team members to go that extra mile in favor for their team.

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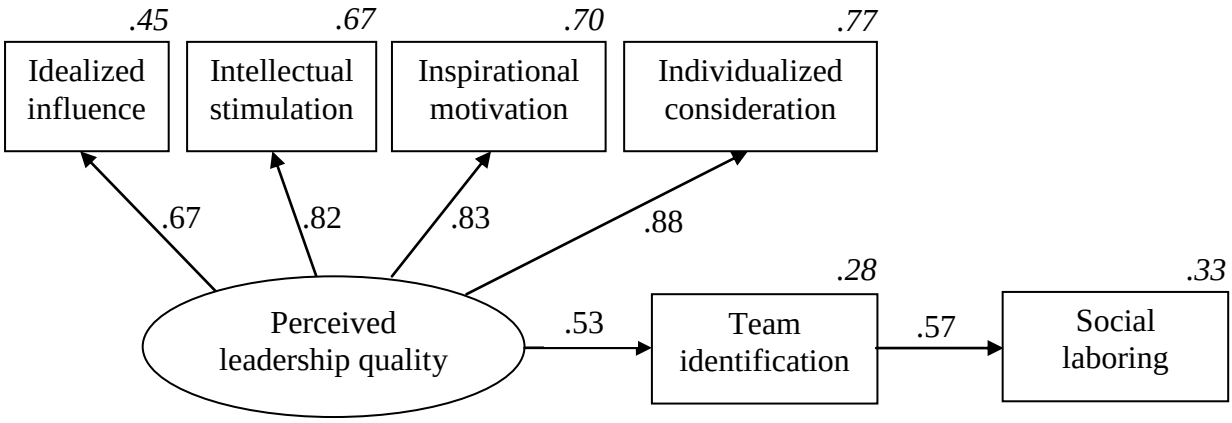

Figure 1. Standardized regression path coefficients and proportion explained variance of the model.

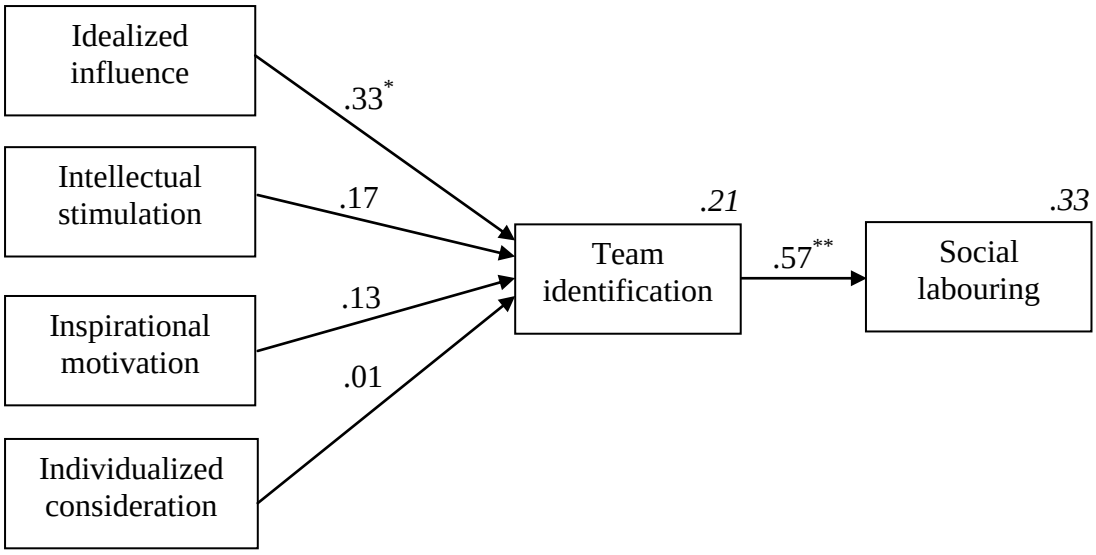

Figure 2. Standardized regression path coefficients and proportion explained variance of the model, including the different subscales of transformational leadership as predictors. $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .001$.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, correlations, and Cronbach's alpha's

Measure	***M (SD)***	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
1. Social laboring	2.13 (.78)	α = .78						
2. Team identification	2.36 (.79)	.57**	α = .82					
3. Idealized influence	2.85 (.63)	.34*	.51**	α = .73				
4. Intellectual stimulation	2.47 (.71)	.28*	.45**	.58**	α = .78			
5. Inspirational motivation	2.57 (.74)	.29*	.44**	.60**	.62**	α = .77		
6. Individualized consideration	2.58 (.71)	.29*	.40**	.52**	.75**	.76**	α = .78	
7. Transformational leadership (total scale)	2.64 (.58)	.36**	.54**	.82**	.87**	.85**	.88**	α = .91

*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$